by the Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company has been rejected in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the fact in this regard; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that the said company had carried out trial of the production of the said seeds in these States and on the basis of these trials, Government had granted permission for production of these seeds in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company (MAHYCO) has been accorded approval for cultivation of three Bt cotton hybrids in March, 2002 only. The first produce of the approved varieties will come only at the end of Kharif 2000. Hence, the question of rejecting the produce of Bt cotton seeds developed by MAHYCO in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir. Large scale field trials of Bt hybrids have been carried out in these States by the company as well as by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Based on the biosafety assessment and these large scale field trials, the Government has accorded conditional approval for cultivation of three Bt cotton hybrids in the country.

Teaching of religion in schools

352. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Article 28 of the Constitution specifically states that no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution, wholly maintained out of State funds; if so, why the NCERT recommended "principles of the major world religions in the curriculum framework 2000";

(b) whether any Board had objected to inclusion of this provision; and

(c) how the NCERT envisages the teaching of major religions in the schools and from where would the teachers come?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) Strictly in accordance with the spirit of the Indian constitution, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education-2000 (NCFSE-2000), does not recommend any religious education, but education about religions. The Constitution does not say anything against teaching about the basic principles of major world religions. In fact, all the major Commissions on education have recommended teaching about the basic principles of all religions.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The NCFSE-2000 envisages teaching about the basic principles of major world religions with the help of carefully developed reading materials transacted by unbiased and objective teachers properly oriented through authentic orientation materials related to different religions and religion related values. These teachers will be the regular teachers in the school system.

Uniform syllabus for universities

353. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether University Grants Commission issued a direction recently, for revamping syllabi of universities for uniform syllabus for universities;

(b) whether a model frame-work has also been communicated to universities;

(c) if so, the details of the expert body and of experts who formulated above model frame-work;

(d) whether the model frame-work has been discussed with any Central and State Universities, before communicating;

(e) whether States, different religious groups and minorities used to initiate educational institutions according to requirements;

(f) if so, whether uniform syllabi is an infringement in freedom of pluralistic society and federal structure; and

(g) whether competent authority would consider to withdraw above direction?